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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 RPO DUBAI 000481

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

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TAGS: IR PGOV PREL

SUBJECT: IRAN PRESS: INITIAL IRAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF PRESIDENT OBAMA
NOVEMBER 4 STATEMENT

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: As of late November 5, Iranian press coverage of President Obama's November 4 statement on Iran has been scant, with most domestic coverage focused on the November 4 "National Struggle Against Global Arrogance Day" events. What coverage there has been was relatively factual, with articles highlighting President Obama's expression of desire to re-establish relations with Iran, and consisting essentially of quotations from the statement. Much of the coverage of President Obama's November 4 statement also covered or at least referred to Supreme Leader Khamenei's November 3 negative comments on US policy towards Iran. END SUMMARY.

CONSERVATIVE

¶2. (SBU) Mehrnews Website (Traditional Conservative): Relatively short and factual coverage with many quotes from the President Obama statement, although some implicit editorializing in the subtitle).

SUBTITLE: While Repeating Unclear Positions..

TITLE: Obama: America Seeks Respectful Relations with Iran:

SELECTED QUOTES:

"Washington is Seeking Relations with Tehran based on bilateral interests and mutual respect"

"...the time has come for the government of Iran to choose whether to open its doors to more opportunity and success and justice for its people or not."

"..the Iranian government must choose. We have heard for 30 years that the Iranian government is opposed to things but now the question is what sort of future Tehran is pursuing."

The article notes that the West and Iran have had a clash of opinion re the nature of Iran's peaceful nuclear program. It says that President Obama again recognized Iran's right for peaceful use of nuclear power and that the US along with other Western countries has taken basis steps towards building Iran's confidence.

"Diplomatic relations between Washington and Tehran were ended after the events of November 4, 1979 but I say clearly that the US is seeking relations is seeking relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran based on bilateral interests and mutual respect in a movement beyond past events. The time has come for creating new relations between Tehran and Washington."

¶3. (SBU) Kayhan Newspaper (hardline Conservative): As to be expected, clearly slanted reporting of the President Obama statement, with many quotes pulled from the statement:

TITLE: 'On the Pretext of 13 Aban, America Again Bares its Iron Hand'

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LEAD SENTENCE: "In a statement on the occasion of the anniversary of the Occupation of the 'Den of Spies,' the President of the United States once gain repeated his lying claims concerning establishing relations with Iran based on mutual respect."

HIGHLIGHTED QUOTES:

- "with a threatening tone he [President Obama] said, 'Iran must decide whether to open the way for opportunity and success or not.'

- 'without reference to the crimes of 30 years ago by the White House leaders against the Iranian nation, which as the Supreme Leader has said is a thick book'

'Obama made these claims of non-interference in Iran's internal affairs and preference for establishing respectful relations with Iran when on the previous day he signed a Pentagon budget for 55 million dollars for soft war against Iran.'

¶4. (SBU) ISNA (Semi-Official): Largely objective coverage of the statement, although most of the story is actually coverage of Khamenei's November 3 speech on 'US arrogance'

TITLE: Repetition of Obama's "Superficially

Reconciliation-Seeking" Positions On the Anniversary of the Occupation of the Den of Spies [Note: the quotation "On the Surface Reconciliatory" is from Khamenei's November 3 speech on the US]. The story quotes both from the Obama statement and from Reuters and Associated Press coverage of it.

LEAD SENTENCE: In a statement released late Tuesday the American President, in a continuation of his policy of delivering "superficially reconciliation-seeking" speeches announced that "now is the time for Iran to decide whether it wishes to focus on its past or whether to open the door towards larger opportunities.

HIGHLIGHTED QUOTES:

"Obama without reference to the history of hostile US actions towards Iran and the main reason for the occupation of the den of spies by the 'Students Following the Imam's Line,' claimed that " This event helped set the United States and Iran on a path of sustained suspicion, mistrust, and confrontation"

"This Obama statement was put forward at a time when Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei on Tuesday with reference to the need for insight in recognizing 'arrogance' called America the real arrogant power in the world, saying " as long as the American government doesn't refrain from its threats and arrogant spirit, the Iranian nation will not be fooled by the superficially reconciliation-seeking statement of the US.."

¶5. (SBU) FARDA NEWS (Pragmatic Conservative Website, Associated with Tehran Mayor Qalibaf): Relatively factual, this article quotes from the Obama statement while noting the current state of US-Iran relations relative to the nuclear issue and the current IAEA proposal. It also has a passing reference to Khamenei's November 3 statement about Iran not being fooled by the US's "superficially reconciliation-seeking" statements.

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TITLE: In a Statement on The Occasion of the 13th of Aban Obama's Invitation to Iran to Renew Relations

SUBTITLE: Obama, on the threshold of the 30th anniversary of the Occupation of the Den of Spies, invites Iran for an understanding on the nuclear program and said that to arrive at this understanding Iran needs to put its past aside and choose a new relationship with Iran.

¶6. (SBU) Press TV (Official, English language - not much domestic readership):

TITLE: A Year Later, Obama's Iran Policy Unchanged

SUMMARY: The article says that President Obama won office with promises of 'change,' his New Year's speech to Iran opened the

door to the possibility of relations based on respect, "however, he flaked out on the grounds of honesty and mutual respect. The ongoing nuclear issue frenzy and the recent uranium proposal, which has yet to bear fruit, are the perfect examples for this."

The article quotes Obama's November 3 statement, but added that, "If the president, whose popularity is rapidly declining in the US, is really sincere, then there are huge misunderstandings, which need to be addressed. This would also help change the Iranian perspective on his 'acts of deception'.

The article then recounts examples of US interference in contemporary Iran's affairs.

SELECTED QUOTES:

"..President Obama on Friday signed a \$680 billion defense authorization bill into law. The military budget included a bill, allocating up to \$50 million for the expansion of Persian-language broadcasting in Iran by Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty's Radio Farda and the Voice of America's Persian News Network .. the networks are accused of interference in Iran's internal affairs by spreading propaganda against the government."

"This is while in his message, President Obama said, 'We do not interfere in Iran's internal affairs.' "

"What needs to change is the assumption that US actions against Iran are overlooked by the Iranians .. President Obama in his message said it was time for Iran to live up to 'the obligations that every nation has.' But maybe, it is time for the White House to fully exercise the real meaning of 'change' if it seeks a prosperous and productive partner in Iran."

REFORMIST

¶7. (SBU) AFTAB-E YAZD NEWSPAPER, (November 5, Page 11):
Relatively factual coverage, with extensive quotes from the statement.

TITLE: Obama Statement on the 30th Anniversary of the Takeover of the American Embassy, "I Want to Establish Relations With Iran Based on Mutual Respect" [NOTE: interesting that the heading refers to 'takeover of the US Embassy,' not 'takeover of the US Den of Spies.']}

LEAD SENTENCE: US President Barak Obama says that the US wants

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to establish relations with Iran based on bilateral interests and mutual respect.

SUMMARY: After covering the Obama November 3 statement in the first third of the article, the second third of the article, titled "America and Europe Want Iran to Act According to Its Commitments," covers Obama's meeting with EU leaders and his subsequent Iran statement to the effect that the US and the EU wants Iran to participate in the international community, to act in accordance with international law and to fulfill its International commitments. The third and last section of the article covers German Chancellor Merkel's "anti-Iran" positions when appearing at the US Congress.

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